



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

get the risks and the waste of oral transmission. Before concluding, too, that the compiler invented freely, one should bear in mind those words of Professor Marsh concerning the singer of epic songs: "It [the song] belonged to his audience not to him; and his audience required of him that he should be in the highest sense true to it." (Universal Encyclopedia; article, Epic).

One cannot leave Dr. Clawson's monograph without a word of praise for its structure and the lucidity and directness of its style. The points which he makes are with few exceptions made clearly and carefully articulated to the body of the work. Special praise is due the helpful table which he prints near the close of the study.

H. S. V. JONES.

University of Illinois.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY, A CRITICAL AND COMPARATIVE STUDY. By Anna Robeson Burr, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909, pp. viii—451, \$2.00 net.

This book would be worth while if only for its classified information. For reference and for suggestion its use is immediately evident. *Prima facie*, indeed, it may seem fairly easy to give account of a field so limited; but one of the first services of this discussion is to expand one's notions of the limits, to give far wider ideas of scope and significance. For here is something much larger than a *catalogue raisonné*; it is a scientific survey. The author's sense of historical method and her ability to interpret in terms of present psychology give weight alike to her conclusions and to her no less important forecasts of future research. Part I lays down an approach, a working classification, and a scientific measure of the evidence, defines "the three great archetypes", and suggests the main lines of influence. Part II reconsiders the material by approaching it from several aspects, slightly related among themselves, but all suggestive: nationality and profession, memory, religion, and others less important. Some few of these latter chapters, as that on humor and that on self-esteem, lapse toward mere interesting anecdote; but though the chapters of Part II do not develop a series of propositions, though they are in some cases separable essays and various in value, yet one keeps throughout a sense of the large significances sketched broadly in Part I, and this sort of centripetal return from several angles makes the whole systematic without the hardness of more strictly logical coherence.

At the outset "the autobiographic intention" is vindicated as assuring testimony of high scientific value, higher far, in spite of common preconception to the contrary, than attaches to the testimony of diaries and letters. "The constructive touch is needed here, as in other literary work, to carry conviction" (page 58). "The main difference between diary and autobiography lies in an increased sense of proportion in the latter, whose first object is to clear away everything which may come between you and the subject" (page 59). Fixing as the three types Cæsar, Augustin, and Cardan, the author assigns the highest value in each to the autobiography of conscious self-study. The working out of this thesis at large in the chapter on Jerome Cardan's *De Vita Propria Liber* is a destructive analysis of Lombroso and Lelut and a constructive reinterpretation at once convincing as to the particular case and far-reaching in psychological import.

The chapters on "influence and imitation" and on "the autobiographical group" lead less convincingly to the conclusions that "the conditions under which the subjective tendency rises or falls are similar conditions", and that "the subjective autobiography groups itself about the great intellectual movements and changes of the world, and lessens or disappears in times of material change" (page 185). The value of autobiography to the novelist is urged on a principle none the less sound because it is often denied: "The novelist in his proper person finds himself face to face with the fact that emotion cannot with most of us be at once deep and wide, that one is apt to pay for extensive experience by loss of intensive experience, and that, therefore, he must come the most to rely upon his observation and imagination. Armed with these tools, he freely turns to use the written records of the experiences of others. Gauged by the autobiographical intention, they are placed in a proper perspective for the reader; so their full suggestiveness is retained while their trustworthiness is increased" (page 169). The extracts will show that the discussion is brought to bear on various points of wide significance, and that, even where it falls short, or stops short, of conclusiveness, it is still suggestive.

The chapter entitled religion, of course, will arouse most question. The essential significance of Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*, for instance, seems to have been missed. At least the inferences are far smaller and less suggestive than those of Royce's *Case of John Bunyan*. In other cases too much, perhaps, is made of influences merely physical. But since there is neither the narrowness nor the dogmatizing of preconception, any reader may find valuable materials for correcting and extending his own inferences. In analyzing the methods of approaching

the phenomena of religious experience, that of James and Starbuck on the one hand, that of Ribot and Grasset on the other, the author insists on the importance of distinguishing far more than has yet been done the quality of the witness. "Religious conversion is an outcome of emotion, just as poetry is an outcome of emotion; and such emotion may be cheap and transient, or vital and distinguished" (page 233). Herein, she urges, lies the importance of the autobiography. As to genius she takes issue squarely with Lombroso and the other promulgators of the cheap theory of neuropathy, negatively by rebutting their evidence, and positively by bringing out what autobiography assures us of the relation of genius to character.

Too great pains, perhaps, have sometimes been spent in luring the reader over harder stretches of thought by conversational devices of style. Surely no coaxing is necessary where there is so much vitality of interpretation. Without obtruding her own views of life, the author sometimes fixes that interpretation in memorable summary: "The picture (of Mary Robinson) works on us as if she had existed in the pages of Samuel Richardson rather than in life. The poignant reality of great fiction is seldom attained by the half-existence of most human beings" (page 330). "That element of moral education which is used by most parents and guardians in a manner wholly empirical, awaiting the child's maturity until its provisions be really understood, has now and again in the world's history reached, not careless ears and groping, ill-developed instincts, but a fully grown and highly sensitive perception, mature, active, constructive, already a giant" (page 366). "But Goethe, whose ability for science and love of it was marked, let slip the opportunity to make use of it when he came to writing about himself, and so lost to psychology forever the chance of gaining any classified and thorough information as to the mental processes of that man who has served to show, above any other modern, what man may become" (page 69). "(Franklin's) powers were both dignified and expanded by success. His autobiography traces for us the growth of personal thrift into communal economy; of petty ingenuity into great invention; of individual industry into a spirit fit to animate a people; and of intellectual understanding of others, from the tact which enabled him to keep on terms with a drunken partner, into that firm sagacity to which we owe so stable a part of our national existence" (page 211). A writer capable of these sentences needs no fashions of style to hold her readers.

CHARLES SEARS BALDWIN.

Yale University.